Church of God

Association of Christian Schools

Accreditation

Standards

Grades K-12

Revised August 2024

3736 Cragmont Drive

Tampa, FL 33619-1384

(813) 620-3366 (Ext. 112)

Direct Line: (813) 739-5618

www.cgacs.org

CHURCH OF GOD ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

STANDARDS

The standards of the Church of God Association of Christian Schools (CGACS) for kindergarten through twelfth grade are based on sound educational practices. There are eight major categories:

Standard 1   **Philosophy, Governance, and Administration**

    1.1   Foundational Documents
    1.2   Governance
    1.3   Administration
    1.4   Long-Range Strategic Plan

Standard 2   **Curriculum and Instruction**

    2.1   Spiritual Development
    2.2   Curriculum and Instruction

Standard 3   **Campus, Facilities, Safety and Health**

    3.1   Campus
    3.2   Facilities
    3.3   Safety and Health

Standard 4   **Personnel**

    4.1   Faculty
    4.2   Non-teaching Staff
    4.3   Administration

Standard 5   **School Calendar and School Hours**

Standard 6   **Students and Student Services**

    6.1   Student Records
    6.2   Student Curricular and Non-curricular Activities
    6.3   Media Services

Standard 7   **Financial Records/Accounting**

    7.1   Religious Exemption
    7.2   Christian Culture
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Standard 8   **Publications and Community**

    8.1   Parent/Student Handbook
    8.2   Faculty/Staff Handbook
    8.3   Communication
    8.4   Parent Support Services

CHURCH OF GOD ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

The school should organize itself in such a manner as to adequately address each of the following standards utilizing a self-study process. The end result should be a document which demonstrates, through the provision of evidence, how the school meets each of the accreditation standards and any sub-points contained therein.

1.0   Philosophy, Governance, and Administration

    1.1   Foundational Documents

        1.1.1   The school shall have a statement of faith that is not in conflict with that of CGACS.

        1.1.2   The school shall have a written and well-defined statement of educational philosophy.

        1.1.3   The school shall have a written and well-defined mission statement.

        1.1.4   The school shall have a written statement of non-discrimination.

        1.1.5   The school shall have a constitution and bylaws or operate under the constitution and bylaws of a local church or congregation

        1.1.6   The school must have organizational goals/objectives in spiritual, academic and developmental disciplines.

    1.2   Governance

        1.2.1   The school shall be governed by a board or some other body that maintains fiduciary responsibility for the school.

        1.2.2   The governing body shall be individuals of spiritual and professional integrity.

        1.2.3   The governing board shall oversee the formulation and development of policies and maintain an official record of all policies and procedures.

        1.2.4   The governing body shall maintain a complete record of all board meeting minutes.

        1.2.5   The governing board is responsible for the selection and formal evaluation of the school administrator.

    1.3   Administration

        1.3.1   The school shall comply with all federal, state, and local regulations that pertain to the operation of a private school.

        1.3.2   The school files appropriate government reporting forms annually.

        1.3.3   The school maintains appropriate government forms for employees.

1.4 Long-Range Strategic Plan

    1.4.1 The school shall have a Long-Range Strategic Plan that is realistic, prioritized, and reviewed for progress and updates.

2.0 Curriculum and Instruction

2.1 Spiritual Development

    2.1.1 The school shall define its role in the Christian community and the scope of its spiritual ministry (i.e., discipleship, evangelism, etc.)

    2.1.2 Bible shall be taught as a subject in each grade/age level for a minimum of 150 minutes each week (may include a formal chapel time).

    2.1.3 The school shall have a means, formal or informal, of assessing the spiritual needs of its school community.

    2.1.4 The school shall provide for the memorization of the Holy Bible.

2.2 Curriculum and Instruction

    2.2.1 Curriculum Implementation

- The curriculum shall address the needs of students as spiritual beings as well as cognitive learners.

  - The school integrates a biblical worldview in all subject areas.
  - At a minimum, curriculum must address language, reading, writing, mathematics, social sciences, physical sciences, and physical education.
  - If a secondary school, foreign language, fine arts, and computer instruction must be addressed.
  - If a secondary school, graduation requirements must be clearly defined.

- Technology

  - The school includes educational and instructional technology in its long-term strategic plan.
  - The technology resources staff is sufficient and appropriately qualified to provide effective service to students and staff.
  - Technology resources are appropriately maintained and supported annually with funding from the school budget.
  - Adequate skills training on the use of technology resources and equipment is provided to the staff and students.
  - The school implements written policies and procedures for acceptable use of technology.

- The school provides curriculum guides for each subject and each grade level, a scope and sequence, and other curriculum planning documents (curricular frameworks, curriculum maps, curriculum pacing guides, etc.) that are unique to the cultural values of the school community.

2.2.2 Instructional Methodology

The school shall implement a biblical pedagogy in all instructional areas.

The school shall ensure that teachers use a variety of instructional experiences in order to address the diversity of learners enrolled in the school.

Where applicable, the school extends the learning experience through community resources.

The school shall provide teacher planning time sufficient for developing a quality educational environment.

The school shall employee sufficient number of teachers so as to maintain student-to-teacher rations appropriate to the academic program offered.

Non-Traditional Instruction

> If offered, ESE services must be defined as to types of students/exceptionalities served and program(s) offered.

> If online instruction is accepted or used as a curriculum source, the school must define the supervisor and frequency of supervision.

> If hospital/homebound services are provided, the school must define the supervisor and frequency of supervision.

2.2.3 Evaluation

The school shall systematically evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of curriculum not to exceed a five-year cycle.

> The school shall formally assess the effectiveness of its academic programs to include standardized (norm-referenced or criterion-referenced) testing.

> The school will utilize test data to modify and improve instruction.

Professional Development Standards

> The administrator shall be responsible for, in addition to other administrative duties, the implementation of an annual teacher and staff evaluation plan.

> The administrator shall be responsible for, in addition to other administrative duties, the implementation of an annual staff and faculty professional development plan.

3.0 Campus, Facilities, Safety and Health

3.1 Campus

3.1.1 The campus shall be of sufficient size to support the mission and focus of the school.

3.1.2 The campus must be maintained in a safe and secure manner.

A. Student drop-off and pick-up procedures are clearly identified and followed.
B. Storage areas, easements, equipment, and other areas of concern are not readily accessible to students.
C. On-campus traffic flow is managed safely.
D. Exterior play areas, fields, and common areas are designed to restrict access from outsiders.

3.2 Facilities

3.2.1 The school facilities are sufficient in size and layout to address the learning and physical needs of the students.

3.2.2 The facilities are in good repair.

3.2.3 The facilities are clean, freshly painted, functional, and attractive.

3.2.4 The facilities house sufficient desks, shelves, and storage to meet the needs of the student body and staff.

3.2.5 The school facilities provide classrooms sufficient in size and number to accommodate the needs of the learning environment.

3.2.6 The school facilities provide sufficient office space to conduct the business of the school.

3.2.7 Food service areas are sufficient in size to accommodate the preparation and serving of meals (generally, 12 square feet per daily meals served).

3.2.8 Food service areas are inspected by the appropriate local authority.

3.3 Safety and Health

3.3.1 The school has a Crisis Management Plan or equivalent.

3.3.2 The school conducts fire drills, emergency drills, tornado drills, and other disaster drills in compliance with state law.

3.3.3 The school maintains first aid supplies.

3.3.4 The school provides spill kits in each classroom.

3.3.5 All personnel maintain valid First Aid and CPR training.

4.0 Personnel

4.1 Faculty

4.1.1 The school shall provide evidence that each employee professes to be a Christian.

4.1.2 Each teacher must undergo background screening as provided for in state law.

4.1.3 Each teacher must hold a bachelor's degree and be substantially qualified for the

position for which he/she is hired.

4.1.4 Each teacher shall hold a current teaching credential from the Church of God Association of Christian Schools, a valid teaching certificate from any state, or a letter of Credential Acceptance for a credential held in another agency. Letters of Credential Acceptance must be acquired before the site visit and may be obtained by writing a letter to the CGACS Board requesting such Letter of Credential Acceptance, accompanied by the teacher's transcripts, a list of professional experience, and copies of teacher certificates held in other agencies.

4.1.5 Faculty members must show continued professional growth through periodic and effective teacher evaluations.

4.1.6 Employee files are maintained for every employed teacher.

- o Files are organized in a systematic and professional manner.

- o Files contain ALL documents to attest to the above requirements.

- o Files contain copies of signed contracts, current W-4, I-9, and other legal documents required for employment.

4.2 Non-Teaching Staff

4.2.1 The school shall provide evidence that each employee professes to be a Christian.

4.2.2 Each employee must undergo background screening as defined by state law.

4.2.3 Each employee must hold appropriate degrees or have professional training and be substantially qualified for the position for which he/she was hired.

4.2.4 Each employee must show continued professional growth through periodic and effective employee evaluations.

4.2.5 The school employees a sufficient number of support staff to meet the demands of the overall program.

4.2.6 Employee files are maintained for every staff member.

- o Files are organized in a systematic and professional manner.

- o Files contain ALL documents to attest to the above requirements.

- o Files contain copies of signed contracts, current W-4, I-9, and other legal documents required for employment.

4.3 Administration

4.3.1 The school shall have at least one full-time employee appointed by the governing body that serves as the chief administrative officer for the school.

4.3.2 Administrator(s) must hold a minimum of a bachelor's of arts degree from an

accredited university or college, have professional training, and be substantially qualified for the position for which they were hired.

4.3.3   Administrator(s) must show continued professional growth through periodic and effective employee evaluations.

4.3.4   The school employees a sufficient number of administrators to meet the demands of the overall program.

4.3.5   Employee files are maintained for every administrator employed.

   o   Files are organized in a systematic and professional manner.

   o   Files contain ALL documents to attest to the above requirements.

   o   Files contain copies of signed contracts, current W-4, I-9, and other legal documents required for employment.

4.3.6   The school administrator or designee is responsible for maintaining minutes for each faculty meeting that is held throughout the school year.

5.0 School Calendar and School Hours

The school year shall have a minimum of 180 actual school days or a minimum of 170 school days and the hourly equivalent as follows:

Kindergarten	540 net instructional hours
Grades 1-3	720 net instructional hours
Grades 4-12	900 net instructional hours

6.0 Student and Student Services

6.1 Student Records

6.1.1   A cumulative student file shall be kept on every student enrolled in the school as well as for former students.

6.1.2   All files must be systematically organized, maintained regularly, and kept up to date.

6.1.3   Current student files must contain at a minimum:

Enrollment application
Parent agreements
Cumulative academic records
Health records as required by law
Copy of birth certificate
Discipline records
Attendance records

6.1.4   All records shall be maintained in a lockable, fire-proof file cabinet.

6.1.5 The school must have a policy for the permanent maintenance of school records in the event that the school ceases to exist.

6.1.6 The school must have a policy regulating access to student records, recognizing both public access as well as privacy laws governed by the state of Florida.

6.2 Student Curricular and Non-curricular Activities

6.2.1 Scope and Oversight

6.2.1.1 Student activities must fit into the overall mission and philosophy of the school.
6.2.1.2 Student activities should have objectives and purpose for students.
6.2.1.3 A variety of activities should be offered that address the varying needs interests, skills, and proficiencies of students and the overall school community.
6.2.1.4 All activities must be regulated and governed by school administration and must be a direct service provided by the school.
6.2.1.5 All activities must be supervised by an authorized adult.

6.2.2 Staffing and Funding

6.2.2.1 Student activities staff must conform to the spiritual culture of the school.
6.2.2.2 Student activities staff must be Christian in both profession of faith and practice of faith.
6.2.2.3 Student activities staff must submit to appropriate background checks as regulated by state law.
6.2.2.4 Student activities must be funded adequately.
6.2.2.5 Student activities income and expenses should be easily identified in the financial records.

6.3 Media Services

6.3.1 A school must provide relevant age- and developmentally-appropriate print material, media, software, and access to supplemental literature, as well as learning and cultural material not directly addressed in curriculum sufficient to the needs of the student body.

6.3.2 The school shall have an adequate number of catalogued books according to the number of students enrolled with no less than ten books per student.

6.3.3 A school shall avail itself of community resources to augment the student learning experience where applicable.

6.3.4 Library resources are funded annually through the school's budget.

6.3.5 The school shall have a written policy defining the process whereby literature and media are evaluated and selected for student use.

7.0 Financial Records/Accounting

7.1 The school must be a religious exempt agency for the purpose of education or the school must be under the control of a local church.

7.2   Christian Culture

   7.2.1   The school develops a distinct Christian culture:
           Evident in employee to employee policy and interaction
           Evident in employee to student policy and interaction
           Evident in student to student policy and interaction

   7.2.2   Policies and practices are reflective of biblical principles in all areas.

7.3   Finances

   7.3.1   Planning
           7.3.1.1 The administration develops a realistic and balanced budget.
           7.3.1.2 The budget is developed in collaboration with the governing body.
           7.3.1.3 Annually, benefits are reviewed and offered within the means of the budget.
           7.3.1.4 The administration provides for appropriate salary and benefits for all faculty and staff.

   7.3.2   Managing

           7.3.2.1 The governing body ensures successful financial management of the school.

           7.3.2.2 The school shall demonstrate a sound budgeting process by showing evidence of responsible fiscal management over the past three years.

           7.3.2.3 The school provides formal financial review and reporting at least annually.

   7.3.3   Receivables

           7.3.3.1 The school publishes a tuition and fee schedule that is available to parents and staff.

           7.3.3.2 The school publishes a tuition and fee refund policy.

           7.3.3.3 The school has ethical policies and procedures for receiving money that reflect the highest sense of accountability and control and are in compliance with generally accepted accounting practice.

           7.3.3.4 The school clearly identifies all sources of revenue, including fundraising and development.

   7.3.4   Payables

           7.3.4.1 The school clearly identifies all expenses through appropriate reporting.

           7.3.4.2 The school has ethical policies and procedures for the disbursement of monies that reflect the highest sense of accountability and control and are in compliance with generally accepted accounting practices.

           7.3.4.3 Salaries are adequate and in compliance with local, state, and federal

regulations.

7.3.4.4 The school maintains clearly identifiable records for disbursements.

8.0 Publications and Community

8.1 Parent/Student Handbook

8.1.1 The school provides a handbook of policies and procedures to parents/students that contain at least the following:
The school's statement of educational philosophy
Admission or enrollment policies that appropriately identify those students for whom the academic program was designed
Behavioral expectation and disciplinary procedures and measures
Policies regarding holidays, illnesses, hours of operation, fees and financial obligations, refunds, enrollment, and termination procedures
Explanation of daily procedures which parents must follow
Nondiscrimination policy
Immunization requirements
Absences/Tardies
Student Records
Cheating
Achievement Testing
Grading scale and standards
Promotion and graduation requirements
Homework
Suspension/Expulsion
Dress code
Extracurricular activities
Field Trips
Religious instruction/spiritual development
Visitors
Sexual Harassment
Inappropriate items brought on campus

8.1.2 The school must have a signed statement that parents acknowledge receipt, understanding, and agreement to the school's policy and procedures.

8.2 Faculty/Staff Handbook

8.2.1 The school provides a handbook of policies and procedures to all faculty and staff that contains at least the following:

The school's statement of educational philosophy
Policies regarding holidays, hours of operation, and termination procedures, and a three-step grievance procedure
Explanation of daily procedures which staff and faculty must follow
Staff and faculty expectations to include
Dress codes
Sexual harassment
School's student and disciplinary procedures
School's faculty and staff disciplinary procedures
Grading procedures and expectations

Faculty and staff evaluation procedures
Nondiscrimination policy
Funeral, sick, and maternity leave
Substitute teachers
Teacher ethics and conduct
Tuition discounts

8.2.2   The school shall annually instruct the staff and faculty regarding the school's employee policies.

8.2.3   The school must have a signed statement that faculty and staff acknowledge receipt of, understand, and agree to the school's policy and procedures.

8.3 Communication

8.3.1   General Parent Communications.   Administrators and staff maintain periodic communication with parents utilizing a variety of verbal, print, and electronic means.

8.3.2   Student Progress. The school provides conference opportunities with parents at least twice per year—and at other times as needed—to discuss the child's developmental and academic progress.

8.3.3   Academic Reporting.   The school shall report student academic progress formally and periodically no less than three times each year.

8.3.4   Significant Changes in Behavior and Suspected Abuse. The school must have a policy and procedure for documenting significant changes in a child's pattern of behavior and/or physical condition, how they are reported to parents and documented.   Additionally, schools must have a policy and procedure for documenting and reporting child abuse. All child abuse reporting must comply with state and local laws and regulations.

8.4 Parent Support Services

8.4.1   The school is prepared to refer parents to available community services and resources regarding children with specific needs. School administration should seek to work collaboratively with community agencies in providing information as needed.